

DR. AMICK'S DISCOVERY.

Statistics of Consumption is Causing Wide-Spread Consternation

AMONG MANY THOUSAND CONSUMPTIVES.

Merits of the Project Argued by Prominent Physicians—The Action of the Michigan Board of Health.

The recent action of the Michigan State Board of Health in placing consumption on the list of contagious diseases and requiring safeguards to prevent its spread, is causing widespread newspaper discussion as to the propriety of similar action in other States.

Not only has the Michigan Board of Health taken this radical step, but the County Medical Society of Philadelphia has petitioned the Board of Health there to isolate consumptives. The Pan-American Congress also passed a resolution at the recent Washington convention calling on the National Government to take steps in the same direction, even going so far as to ask President Cleveland to give his personal attention to the matter.

The result has been that National, State and city authorities have been appealed to, thereby causing consternation to thousands of consumptives in every State in the Union, who are in terror lest they should be torn from their homes and friends and turned over to the "special hospitals," which in reality will be pest-houses.

The turmoil which the proposition has created, is steadily increasing, and a great wave of opposition is appearing.

Friends of consumptives declare that if isolation of the patients is attempted in special hospitals, numerous outrages will result and that not only will unfeeling persons, who want to get rid of sick relatives, dump them upon the hospitals, but machinations will arise of a most evil character. Small tradesmen, for instance, afflicted by a cough, may suddenly find themselves moved out of their competitors' way, by a judicial process which will send them to the special consumptive hospital to end their days.

Some declare that while the appearance of smallpox or cholera in the land is the signal for immediate, wide-spread alarm, and the inauguration of severe repressive measures, consumption, which is always present and is chronically epidemic, is allowed to take an unchecked course, the people not realizing that it is far more deadly than any other disease, and is slowly but surely increasing its silent ravages. It is claimed that as half of the people who have consumption do not realize the fact, they spread a false confidence among their friends, who carelessly allow themselves to come in contact with the victims, and are, in turn, fatally infected.

The Herald commenting on this subject, quotes the action of the Congress de la Tuberculose, recently held in Paris, in which the following resolution was adopted:

"In view of the fact that life, in common of consumptives with the other patients in the hospitals, is disadvantageous both to themselves and others, and that the risks that they run and to which they expose others are not compensated by any serious profit, the members of the Congress are of opinion that all consumptive patients should be gathered together in special hospitals in groups, according to the period of their disease, and that these groups should be as small as possible at the earliest stage of the complaint.

"In consideration of the fact that in the present condition of the science a continuous and sufficient supply of pure air is one of the most powerful elements in the treatment of tuberculosis, it is also advisable that these hospitals should be built in the country, or at the seashore.

"Finally, as a transitory measure, to last as short a time as possible, consumptives should, for the time being, be united in special wards in the hospitals, apart from those of the other patients, and the walls and furniture of these wards should be disinfected at stated intervals."

Another scheme for the isolation of consumptives, which has just been announced by the Denver, Colo., News, is to the effect that W. N. Byers, representing a syndicate of Boston capitalists, has applied at the office of the Colorado Land Commissioner for sections of land on which to colonize consumptives from New England. The idea is to erect suitable buildings and put the patients at gentle work, attending to fruit and poultry, bee culture and gardening, insisting, all of the time, upon suitable physical exercise. The idea is that patients in the first stages of consumption might be housed in the mild, dry air of Colorado, and that their light labors can be turned to the pecuniary advantage of the syndicate.

The Cincinnati Post over a year ago interested itself in the question of the cause of consumption and the possibility of its cure. Since that time many other newspapers have devoted attention to the subject.

Recent statistics, carefully gathered,

have shown that one-seventh of all the deaths in the United States from disease are caused by consumption, and this startling fact, prominently presented, has served to increase the agitation which has been aroused.

In order to get at the opinions of the leading physicians of Cincinnati on the latest aspect of the case, i. e., that relating to the proposed isolation of consumptives, interviews were secured with Drs. Whitaker, Jenkins, Amick, Brunning and others.

Dr. William Jenkins said: "I thoroughly believe in the scheme for the isolation of consumptive patients. The best plan is to take the patient out of his home and put him in a house specially built for consumptives. The idea may seem a harsh one, but it is certainly in the interest of the friends of the sufferer. The great trouble with the project would be to get patients in the first stage of the disease to go to such a retreat. Most of them don't believe that they have consumption, and you can not convince them to the contrary."

Dr. Whitaker said: "I do not approve of the isolation project simply because I do not think it would do any practical good. Isolation, the taking away of a consumptive from his home and friends, would be rather inhuman."

"In every case of consumption the result of contact with some other case, or is the disease sometimes sporadic, like cholera?"

"No. There is no such thing as sporadic consumption. It is not even an inherited disease. Every case owes its origin to communication. Many cases of consumption are contracted at bedside. One patient can give it to twenty well persons. Strong men with no predisposition that way, get it. Why, one of the worst places to contract consumption is in a post-office corridor. A consumptive coming in, sits on the floor. He spreads the germs of his disease to be inhaled by others who enter. There should be cuspidors in post-offices, in market houses and in all other public places. Spitting by consumptives upon sidewalks is not so dangerous, as the open air disseminates the germs more widely than in a building."

"Do you think that consumption is increasing or decreasing?"

"Probably decreasing on account of better methods used in treating it. The newspapers can do great good by calling attention to the great danger of consumption and noting the necessity for greater care in guarding against the disease. People are too careless. No doubt isolation would be of benefit to patients and do good, but it could not be enforced."

Dr. W. R. Amick, who resigned his professorship in the Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery, held for seventeen years, to devote himself to curing consumption, said:

"I am, of course, opposed to isolation, because my theory is that consumption is not directly produced by an outside cause. I hold that the bacillus microbe is the effect, or product, and not the cause of the disease, so it is very evident, in my opinion, that isolation would accomplish no good."

"You mean to say, then, that the inhaling of the dried-up sputa, containing these microbes, is not harmful?"

"On the contrary," Dr. Amick replied, "any dust or extraneous matter would produce a mechanical irritation of the parts and be likely to occasion lung trouble—as the inhalation of the dried sputa of a consumptive. Just as a speck of dust irritates the eye, the inhalation of any foreign matter irritates the air passages."

Continuing, Dr. Amick said:

"You may state as my opinion that the natural secretion of the healthy mucous membrane either destroys the germs so inhaled or renders them of no effect, so far as any intrinsic power to produce the disease is concerned. If consumption was either contagious or infectious, I would have had it long since, as I am daily exposed with the worst possible cases, and during the investigation leading to my discovery of the cause and cure of the disease, I sought out the worst forms of it and made microscopic examination of diseased sputa a marked feature of my professional work and research. Notwithstanding all this, and although predisposed to consumption, I have inhaled the diseased breath and germs of tuberculous patients almost continually without ill effect."

"On what grounds, doctor, have all these appeals for the isolation of consumptives been made?"

"On the theory of some bacteriologists that the disease is communicated by microbes expectorated by the consumptive."

Asked as to how many of the medical profession agreed with his theory to the contrary, Dr. Amick said: "From all I can learn perhaps one-half and a majority of the other half freely express their surprise that considering my treatment is not based on the bacilli theory, it proves so efficacious. A year or two I was practically alone in advocating my theory, but to-day the progressive physicians agreeing with me are numbered by thousands and I prophesy that in a few years very few will contend that the microbe causes the disease. I make no attempt to destroy the bacilli in my treatment, for they disappear

of themselves as the disease is conquered, and this is observed in using the microscope by physicians prescribing my medicines. I consider this the strongest possible proof that microbes are not the cause of the disease, and that they cannot exist under normal healthy conditions. It does not require a scientist to understand that inasmuch as the bacilli are not found until the expectoration becomes purulent that they could not produce this purulent condition. No, unlike smallpox, the disease does not announce itself in any aggressive manner, but begins with gradually increasing weakness, loss of strength and appetite, and is firmly seated before the bacilli are produced, thus showing that the disease precedes these germs. Suppose you yourself," said Dr. Amick to The Post man, "caught cold; suppose that cold ran into catarrhal pneumonia, which, in turn, resulted in consumption. I do not think anyone could make you believe it was a microbe instead of a draught or exposure which occasioned your catching cold, and yet you admit the cold produced the disease. No, I firmly contend," concluded Dr. Amick, "that the isolation and separation of these poor, sick consumptives from the only ones who for affection's sake would care for them, is not only inhuman but unnecessary, and not only unnecessary but impracticable. Please remember that they are not numbered by hundreds or thousands, but by hundreds of thousands, and that nearly every one who reads The Post has near or dear relatives in consumption, who properly administered, to, can be restored to health, but whom isolation might place beyond all hope. It will require no argument to convince you that the relatives of these sick ones will vigorously protest against any such enactment, and the good citizens of this country will help them prevent them carrying out of the proposed cruel imposition."

Dr. Brunning said:

"Consumption is increasing in cities on account of the favorable conditions which exist for its dissemination. All cases of the disease are communicated. There are no sporadic cases. The germs are in the atmosphere which everybody breathes, but they only take hold in a favorable soil, in the proper type of human organism. Isolation of consumptives is difficult. People attending them should use great care in disinfecting the discharges. The disease is contagious from its start."

"Do you think that Ohio should imitate the Michigan State Board of Health's action in putting consumption in the list of contagious diseases, along with smallpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria and cholera?"

"Well, there is not quite the same danger from consumption as there is from smallpox. Most diseases are contagious. Consumption can never be stamped out by law. People suffering from it cannot be dragged from their homes to a special hospital."

Dr. T. C. Minor declared that he took no stock in the theory that consumption is contagious.

"The death rate from consumption is always greatest on the seacoast and gradually diminishes toward the interior. A moist climate develops lung trouble. I do not believe it can be accounted for by the microbe theory. It would be the height of cruelty to isolate consumptives from their friends and relatives, who are the only ones who will properly care for them."

Dr. F. Forchheimer said briefly:

"Consumption is sometimes contagious, but not always. I cannot now discuss the matter fully."

AMICK'S THEORY.

How It Conflicts With Some Received Opinions.

When the Cincinnati Post undertook, over a year ago, to examine into the causes of tuberculosis and the methods which had been advanced for its cure, the idea was to go thoroughly into the matter and test alleged "cures" that their merits should finally be settled to the satisfaction of the public.

Dr. W. R. Amick had just announced that consumption could be cured by the use of a new method, which he proposed to introduce. Other doctors in considerable numbers, derided the idea that anything more efficient than old school treatment with cod liver oil, creosote and the various hypophosphites could be devised, and some of them entered the newspapers and medical journals to say so in brusque English. Others, again, who were not so confident that the scheme of medical science had been reached, were disposed to await a test of Amick's method, before giving their opinions.

It was at this stage of the proceedings that the Post conceived the idea of selecting test cases of consumption and also one or two of asthma for Amick to treat, the doctor having declared that his formula was equally effective in asthmatic troubles. The plan for the test, as laid down by the Post and accepted, finally by Amick, was to select from persons who were affected with tuberculosis and had three whose cases had passed beyond the initial stage and would therefore be past the assistance of such treatment as could be given by the standard methods of the day.

It was agreed that if Amick suc-

ceeded in curing the test patients he should be given full and free credit for the same, and that if he failed the treatment should receive merited condemnation. Full reports of the progress of the tests were to be published frequently until the end of the undertaking and the patients either died or got well.

Acting on this plan The Post advertised for patients and secured several, including one of chronic asthma of 37 years' standing and others of consumption which had progressed into the third stage. The treatment of all the cases was persistently carried on for over six months. The progress of the test was daily chronicled and became familiar to all the people of the Ohio Valley and contiguous States. Marked interest was excited and the outcome was as anxiously awaited by the public as by the unfortunate patients themselves.

After the lapse of the time mentioned the Post stated that all of the test patients were alive and well.

At the present time one of these test patients is living on North Bend, O., while another resides at West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, and is continually praising the Amick cure as a final relief from long continued trouble, and the third who gained 32 pounds in six weeks has become a giant in strength and lives now on Main street.

Just before the test of the Amick cure took place, as narrated, Dr. Koch, the celebrated German physician and scientist, had announced a cure for tuberculosis which, when thoroughly tested, proved to be inefficient and the collapse of the general expectation which had followed Koch's announcement, made it difficult for Amick's treatment to find favor.

Nevertheless a considerable number of physicians noting the apparently favorable progress of the tests, and convinced by the sincerity of Dr. Amick, by the fact that he declared himself willing to send out free to all regular practitioners sample outfits of his medicines, with directions of treatment of test cases, concluded to experiment for themselves, and to this end sent for medicines and directions.

While their test cases were progressing in various parts of the country, other physicians, who thought to get rid of patients who they could no longer treat with a show of success, sent the same to Amick, determined to shift all responsibility upon him, and perchance cause a failure of a system of treatment which would make an unfavorable comparison with their own.

Some of them declared that Amick's refusal to make public his formula of medicines was a great wrong and of itself suggested a money-making spirit, rather than a broad and humanitarian character.

Amick replied to these critics that his reason for keeping the formula secret was to prevent the tinkering of inefficient doctors, who, by adding to or subtracting from the medicines would achieve varied results, in the main disastrous, and the whole system would, in time, be thrown into disrepute. It was a new theory of practice, which was confronted by the opposition of old time ideas and prejudices, and every safeguard was needed that could be devised to keep the medicines and method of applying them free from innovations, until such time as the treatment should become universally approved and accepted, when the formulas might, without further restraint, be freely given to the world.

Dr. Amick, in the early days of his experiments, was beset with doubts and fears as to the final outcome, and he was greatly troubled over some of the desperate cases of consumption sent to him by other physicians for treatment. He scarcely knew himself the virtues of the treatment he had originated, and trembled lest many deaths should occur on his hands and discredit the treatment.

But a large percentage of the third stage cases sent to him improved visibly under his care, and finally ended in recoveries. Others died.

The fame of Amick's new treatment had by this time become generally diffused throughout America, and vast numbers of letters of inquiry came pouring in upon the Cincinnati physician from the north, south, east and west. The doctor finally awoke to the fact that he had become famous.

A Cincinnati correspondent of the New York Recorder called the attention of that journal to the Amick test cases which had been conducted by the Cincinnati Post, and as the Recorder was in the field with an offer of a \$1000 prize for the demonstration of a successful method of curing tuberculosis, an arrangement was made with Dr. Amick for a public test in New York.

The Recorder selected ten patients whom Dr. Amick took under his care, with the ultimate result that all but one were pronounced cured, and the Recorder, having satisfied itself of the fact of their recovery, paid Amick the \$1000 prize.

This triumph of the Cincinnati discoverer was not unalloyed with bitterness, however. Envious persons and others who practiced medicine under the old time rules and regulations, seeing the rise of Amick's new treatment, opened fire upon him through

the columns of certain journals, and endeavored to convince the public that somehow or other the doctor's discovery was not all it seemed to be. He had long practiced medicine in Cincinnati, however, and had been of excellent reputation in his craft. So innuendos fell flat, more especially when his brother, the well known Prof. M. L. Amick, also of the Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery, came out and associated himself in the new treatment, bringing with him the ripe results of twenty-five years' medical labors.

Dr. W. R. Amick did not at the time declare, nor does he do so now, that his treatment is an infallible one. He insists that no extravagant claims shall be made for it, and asserts that not more than 20 per cent of third stage cases can receive any lasting benefit from his medicines. He does, however, declare that the treatment is almost a specific in the earlier stages of consumption, where the directions given by him are carefully observed and no complication of other diseases is present.

Since the close of the tests made by The Post and the Recorder, many other newspapers throughout the United States have conducted similar tests, and so have numerous hospitals and sanitariums.

The Minneapolis Times, speaking editorially of the spread of the Amick cure, says:

"Thirty or more physicians in the city have taken the medicines compounded by Dr. Amick, and are testing them in their practice. One of the doctors gives it as his opinion that the medicines, in the test cases, accomplished more than the discoverer claimed for them. It may be that a reliable cure has been found, but if not that, a help has been introduced which will greatly assist in the unequal battle that must be fought against this enemy of human life."

Another editorial article, published by the Minneapolis Journal says:

"Dr. Amick, who has acquired a great deal of celebrity of late by his successful treatment of phthisis, has recently had his cure investigated by and at the instigation of the press of Cleveland. Of ten almost hopeless cases which were selected only one died, two were pronounced cured, four showed marked improvement, and three were much improved. In all cases there was an increase in weight, and the subjects had only been under treatment two months."

The physicians who watched the course of treatment expressed themselves as satisfied with the cure and testified as to the great value of the discovery. But a number of doctors who were interviewed accused Dr. Amick of "violating the code." He has made one of the most wonderful and valuable discoveries ever hoped for in medicine, but he refuses to give the formula to every Tom, Dick and Harry to monkey with, and he therefore "violates the code."

The success of Amick's treatment has brought into the greatest prominence his theory that the disease produced the microbe, as against the theory of Koch and many physicians that the bacillus microbe was the cause of consumption. Koch had directed his efforts towards the destruction of this microbe, while avoiding killing the patient. In this he admits that he failed. As a result his medicine "tuberculin" is not now used.

It is believed that something like one-half of the medical profession now adopt Amick's theory, although he has by no means a unanimous support in his beliefs.

It will be seen that Dr. Amick's theory is in direct conflict with the ideas of those who, through lack of a better term, may be called the bacteriologists of the profession and who ascribe all lung troubles to bacteria or bacilli.

These bacteriologists demand, as will be noted in some of the interviews given above, that all consumptives be isolated and treated as though they have smallpox or yellow fever. They insist that a wife shall be separated from her sick husband and a husband from his dying wife, in order to avoid contagion.

The opportunity to freely test the Amick cure is still given to regular physicians in all states of the Union and every day, in response to calls, over 200 free outfits are sent out to applicants.

The criticism continues to be made by physicians of the unchanging and nonprogressive school that Dr. Amick, in allowing the newspapers to exploit his cure, has outraged his profession and should be severely reprimanded.

The reply is made to this charge that Dr. Amick has had no control of the secular press, and he very frankly says that if he had he would not have discouraged any honorable effort to bring his treatment at once thoroughly before the public. Had the usual slow channels of the medical journals been the only means of publicity, thousands of consumptives would have died in the interval.

Dr. Amick does not go, in his opinion, a step further in allowing public attention to be called to his treatment than did Dr. Koch, the German scientist, in spreading the news of his